

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 13 of page 1 of the application as follows:

Marked-up version:

Ferrules and related technology are known in fiber optic connection. The art is replete with examples, including U.S. Patents No. 6,579,601; 6,533,469; 6,416,236; 6,357,933 and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0037140 entitled "Composite Ferrule of Connector for Optical Fibers and Methods of Manufacturing same". A ferrule for use as a connector in an assembly with optical fibers requires high dimensional accuracy and precision, yet in an extremely small-diameter conduit for positioning and holding optical fiber. Present or proposed ferrule connectors for optical fibers, such as U.S. Patent No. 6,357,933 to Lucent Technologies Inc. may not be amenable to ease of manufacture or assembly with optical fiber by the technical personnel carrying out the operation. Thus, in spite of the known application of ferrules in optical fiber connection, there is a continuing need for improvement in the technology of the design and use of ferrules for this purpose. For example, relating to aspects of attenuation and return loss, the establishing of as perfect as possible fiber-to-fiber contact between end portion of optional fibers and the prevention of face dust accumulation between the fiber faces. There is also a need to improve the ease of use of ferrules in an assembly for connection of optical fibers in an optical communication system, by the person carrying out the operation.

Clean version:

Ferrules and related technology are known in fiber optic connection. The art is replete with examples, including U.S. Patents No. 6,579,015; 6,533,469; 6,416,236; 6,357,933 and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0037140 entitled "Composite Ferrule of Connector for Optical Fibers and Methods of Manufacturing same". A ferrule for use as a connector in an assembly with optical fibers requires high dimensional accuracy and precision, yet in an extremely small-diameter conduit for positioning and holding optical fiber. Present or proposed ferrule connectors for optical fibers, such as U.S. Patent No 6,357,933 to Lucent Technologies Inc. may not be amenable to ease of manufacture or assembly with optical fiber by the technical personnel carrying out the operation. Thus, in spite of the known application of ferrules in optical fiber connection, there is a continuing need for improvement in the technology of the design and use of ferrules for this purpose. For example, relating to aspects of attenuation and return loss, the establishing of as perfect as possible fiber-to-fiber contact between end portion of optional fibers and the prevention of face dust accumulation between the fiber faces. There is also a need to improve the ease of use of ferrules in an assembly for connection of optical fibers in an optical communication system, by the person carrying out the operation.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 28 on page 8 of the application as follows:

Marked-up version:

With respect to the present invention, the bore (1) of the ferrule is protected by two caps ~~wires~~ (10), as shown in Figure 3, in order to prevent contamination by dust or any other substances. These two caps ~~wires~~ (10) have wire centres (10a) whose extremities touch one

another in the middle of the "centerer" of the ferrule, to allow for optimal positioning of optical fibers when replaced by them.

Clean version:

With respect to the present invention, the bore (1) of the ferrule is protected by two caps (10), as shown in Figure 3, in order to prevent contamination by dust or any other substances. These two caps (10) have wire centres (10a) whose extremities touch one another in the middle of the "centerer" of the ferrule, to allow for optimal positioning of optical fibers when replaced by them.

Please replace the paragraph that begins at line 10 of page 10, as follows:

Marked-up version:

Once the first connecting clamp (3) is opened, the cap wire (10a) is removed and replaced with the first optical fiber (17), as shown in Figure 5a, which had been previously prepared. The fiber (17) is abutted against the end of the second cap wire (10a), which is still in place. In this way, the junction between the fibers will be made at the middle of the ferrule. Preparation of the fibers comprises removal of the buffer and cleaving the fiber (17). The first external grip (12) is then relaxed so that the first connecting clamp (3) closes on the fiber and maintains it in place (see Figure 6c with strength (22)).

Clean version:

Once the first connecting clamp (3) is opened, the cap wire (10a) is removed and replaced with the first optical fiber (17), as shown in Figure 5a, which had been previously prepared. The fiber (17) is abutted against the end of the second cap wire (10a), which is still in place. In this way, the junction between the fibers will be made at the middle of the

ferrule. Preparation of the fibers comprises removal of the buffer and cleaving the fiber (17). The first external grip (12) is then relaxed so that the first connecting clamp (3) closes on the fiber and maintains it in place (see Figure 6c with strength (22)).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 20 of page 10 of the specification as follows:

Marked-up version:

The second external grip (12) is brought close to the ferrule and its cone (13) is engaged with the end cone (4) located on the ferrule. A force (20b) is applied between the external grip (12) and the corresponding internal grip (14) on the same side of the ferrule (see Figure 7a). This force opens a second connecting clamp (3), as represented by arrows (23). The opening of the connecting clamp (3) is such that the bore (1) diameter is larger than the diameter of the optical fibers. After opening the second connection clamp (3), the cap wire (10a) is removed.

Clean version:

The second external grip (12) is brought close to the ferrule and its cone (13) is engaged with the end cone (4) located on the ferrule. A force (20b) is applied between the external grip (12) and the corresponding internal grip (14) on the same side of the ferrule (see Figure 7a). This force opens a second connecting clamp (3), as represented by arrows (23). The opening of the connecting clamp (3) is such that the bore (1) diameter is larger than the diameter of the optical fibers. After opening the second connection clamp (3), the cap wire (10a) is removed.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on line 27 of page 11 as follows:

Marked-up version:

A first cap wire (10a) is then reinserted into the bore (1), allowing it to abut with the second fiber. The first external grip (12) is released to fix the cap wire (10a) into the ferrule. A similar operation is repeated to the second external grip (12) and its cone (13) in order to expand the bore (1) at the level of the second connecting clamp, thus making it possible to remove the second optical fiber and then the second cap wire (10a) is inserted. The second connecting clamp (3) and the two internal grips (14) are then relaxed, and the ferrule may then be reused to make another optical junction or connection.

Clean version:

A first cap wire (10a) is then reinserted into the bore (10, allowing it to abut with the second fiber. The first external grip (12) is released to fix the cap wire cap wire (10a) into the ferrule. A similar operation is repeated to the second external grip (12) and its cone (13) in order to expand the bore (1) at the level of the second connecting clamp, thus making it possible to remove the second optical fiber and then the second cap wire (10a) is inserted. The second connecting clamp (3) and the two internal grips (14) are then relaxed, and the ferrule may then be reused to make another optical junction or connection.